

STATE OF MICHIGAN

OFFICE OF THE STATE BUDGET

LANSING



DIRECTOR

DATE: May 31, 2007

TO: Local and intermediate school district superintendents

Public school academy administrators

FROM: Margaret M. Ropp, Ph.D., director, Center for Educational Performance and

Information

Jeremy Hughes, Ph.D., deputy superintendent/chief academic officer, Michigan

Department of Education

SUBJECT: Potential Negative Effect of Changes in Class of 2007 On-Time Graduation

Rates

In order to comply with The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 and, as defined in the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook, the state of Michigan is moving to an accountability system for high schools in which a graduation rate includes only "on-time" graduates who earn diplomas in four years (including summer graduates). The state will use a "four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate" calculated by tracking individual students from the time they were enrolled as first-time ninth-graders, with a four-year expected completion rate. This calculation aligns with the guidelines provided by the National Governors Association Graduation Counts Compact. The new rate replaces the estimated four-year graduation rate that has been used since the 1990s, which was not fully compliant with NCLB.

Purpose of this Memo:

- 1. MDE and the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) want to provide early communication to districts on potential changes they might see for the class of 2007 graduation rates that are due primarily to the change to only counting "on-time" graduates (i.e., in four years).
- 2. We want to provide you with information to:
 - a. see the potential impact on the class of 2007 on-time graduation and dropout rates that CEPI is estimating based on Single Record Student Database (SRSD)-reported student information;
 - b. help you determine if there are any issues with properly coding student data that you may be able to correct in the End-of-Year (EOY) 2007 and Fall 2007 SRSD submissions that would impact your rate.
- 3. We would like to notify you that CEPI will be providing additional reports by early fall to help you resolve data quality issues with the 2007 data, as well as provide preliminary information on future cohort students who are on-track and off-track.

Impact:

Based on end-of-year 2006 and fall 2006 data, we anticipate there may be a drop in the state-level graduation rate because of the number of continuing students who were reported at a grade level lower than expected, and thus may not be on track to graduate in 2007.

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	On-Time and Early Graduates:	79%
ĺ	Off-Track – Continuing:	12%
Ī	Dropouts (reported/assumed):	9%

This potential drop is significant in some districts that may have as many as 50 percent of their 2007 cohort not graduating on time (within four years). These are students who were reported in a grade level *lower* than "12" in the Fall 2006 SRSD Submission, when we would expect on-time students to be reported in grade "12."

The data we have received in the Fall 2006 SRSD Submission may indicate the following potential impact for [insert district]:

Total number of students in 2007 four-year cohort ^{1:}	
Number of students reported as 12th grade:	
Number of students reported as off-track-	
continuing:	
Number of students reported or assumed dropout ² :	
2004-2005 reported graduation rate:	

See technical notes at end of letter.

Recommended Actions

- 1. Ensure that the student unique identification codes (UICs) are correctly assigned. Accurate UIC resolution is critical for the graduation rate calculations, as calculations involve tracking individual students over four years (14 data submissions) by UIC.
- 2. Closely inspect the Senior Cohort Report that was made available to your SRSD/UIC authorized user in November 2006 via the SRSD/UIC Application. Have all of these students been reported with the correct information?
 - a. If not, ensure that the accurate data are reported in the End-of-Year 2007 or Fall 2007 SRSD submissions.
 - b. If all information is correct, is there anything your district can do to help these students earn regular diplomas by August 2007 to be considered on-time graduates?
- 3. For districts that may anticipate a drop in graduation rates, begin planning for communicating with your community as to why there may be a dramatic drop in your district graduation rates. Begin working with your school board to prepare for any impact this transition to an on-time, four-year cohort graduation rate may have on your district. Rates for the class of 2007 will be published in summer 2008 as part of the Michigan High School Report Card.
- 4. Carefully review the upcoming report that provides the detailed UIC listing of student status for the 2007 cohort, as well as future cohorts, to ensure that the data your district reported are accurate and complete. Principals in districts with more than one high school will need to work with their SRSD authorized users to see specific impact at the building level.

cc: Secondary school principals
SRSD authorized users
Public school academy authorizers

Technical Notes on Graduation Rate Calculation:

- 1. Total number of students in 2007 cohort *includes* all students statewide who were identified as first-time freshman in fall 2003 (regardless of whether they were retained in grade by the initial or subsequent school districts), or who have since transferred in to this cohort group. Note that no five-year exceptions for any special populations have been applied to these data. As in the past, however, non-public and home-schooled students attending public schools part time, as well as students who have exited out-of-state, to non-public settings, or to home schools have been removed from the total population calculation.
- 2. Number of students reported or assumed dropout includes the following: a) students reported as dropouts or unknown, b) students who were reported as continuing within the district but not subsequently reported by that district and c) students reported as transferred to another district, but not reported by any other districts in the state.